



King County Board of Ethics
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KING COUNTY BOARD OF ETHICS MEETING NOTICE ANNUAL RETREAT

- When:** Saturday, January 11, 2003
8:30 a.m. -- 12:00 noon
- Where:** Horizon House
900 University Street, conference room
Seattle, WA 98101
- Notes:** **Please Note Change of Usual Day, Time and Location**
For directions or questions, please contact the ethics office

AGENDA

- 8:30 a.m. Call to Order; Approval of Agenda
- 8:35 a.m. Introductions
- 8:45 a.m. Review 2002 Annual Report
- 9:15 a.m. Establish 2003 Mission and Goals
- 9:30 a.m. 2003 Initiatives
- 10:00 a.m. **Break**
- 10:15 a.m. Terry Thomas, Executive Director, Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission
- 11:00 a.m. Paul Tanaka, County Administrative Officer, Department of Executive Services
- 12:00 p.m. Adjourn

Upon advance request, reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities
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ALTERNATE FORMATS AVAILABLE



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Minutes of the January 11, 2003, Meeting and Annual Retreat of the King County Board of Ethics

The January 11, 2003, meeting and annual retreat of the King County Board of Ethics was called to order by Chair Price Spratlen at 8:43 a.m. Board members in attendance were:

Lois Price Spratlen, Ph.D., Chair
Mr. Roland H. Carlson
Margaret T. Gordon, Ph.D.
Rev. Paul F. Pruitt
Mr. Jerry Saltzman

Others in attendance:

Mr. Paul Tanaka, County Administrative Officer, Department of Executive Services
Mr. Terry Thomas, Executive Director, Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission
Ms. Catherine A. Clemens, Administrator, King County Board of Ethics
Mr. James J. Buck, Administrative Services Manager, Department of Executive Services

1. *Approval of Agenda.* Mr. Carlson moved and Rev. Pruitt seconded that the board approve the proposed agenda. The board unanimously adopted the motion.

Chair Price Spratlen asked for introductions from those present. Mr. Saltzman, attending his first meeting as the newest board member, gave a brief statement of his background. Each board member, Mr. Buck and Ms. Clemens all spoke briefly of their work experience and history with the ethics board.

The chair expressed appreciation to Rev. Pruitt for hosting the retreat at the Horizon House and to Dr. Gordon for suggesting a new location. In addition, she noted her intention to send a letter of thanks to Mr. Anderson, CEO of Horizon House, for making the location and parking in the building available.

2. *Review of 2002 Annual Report.* Ms. Clemens reviewed the 2002 Annual Report with the board and summarized the information as follows:

Achievements: 1) All program and project goals established by the board and county for 2002 were achieved on time and within budget; 2) over 1,040 individuals received ethics training (64% new employees; 15% supervisors); 3) the board finalized its proposed amendment to the code on the post employment provision and submitted the document to the executive; and 4) under board and staff management, county employees, elected officials, and board and commission members achieved 100% compliance with the financial disclosure program again in 2002.

Board Activities & Outreach: 1) The board conducted nine public meetings in 2002 and members maintained a 93% attendance record; 2) the board hosted its annual reception on June 20, 2002, for county leadership; and 3) Chair Price Spratlen and met with the executive on a quarterly basis and board members met individually with eight of 13 county council

members in informal sessions to discuss ethics-related issues within King County government.

Goals and Performance Measures:

Goal I: Training and Education. The administrator conducted training to 1,043 individuals affected by the ethics code including new employees (64%) and supervisors (15%). The administrator expanded the ethics web site and distributed ethics publications including the Advisory Opinion Subject Index and Summary Guide, Summary of the Code of Ethics; Guide to Doing Business with Contractors and Vendors; and the 2001 Annual Report.

Goal II: Review of the Code of Ethics. The board finalized its proposed amendment to the post employment provisions under the code. The proposed amendment is intended to be easier to understand and clearer in describing what is and is not allowed after officials and employees leave county employment. The board transmitted the proposed amendment to the executive.

Goal III: Advice and Guidance. The Board issued no advisory opinions in 2002 but addressed five requests for opinions in board meetings related to use of county resources; appropriate agencies in which to file complaints; potential conflict of interest for board members; and nepotism. The ethics office responded to 362 ethics-related telephone inquiries and issued 87 written staff informational responses.

Goal IV: Disclosure Programs. By working collaboratively with all county departments, the financial disclosure program achieved 100% compliance with the filing requirement of statements of financial and other interests for 1,969 elected officials, candidates and affected employees, and 436 board and commission members. In addition, 251 contractors and vendors filed disclosure statements with the ethics office.

Goal V: Collaboration with Other Ethics Agencies. Under the direction of the ethics board, the administrator worked with five other ethics agencies in Washington State to host the 2002 Washington State Ethics Conference (WSEC); served on the publications committee for the international Council on Governmental Ethics Laws (COGEL); and served as a presenter on ethics to the Northwest Ethics Network, 2002 Blacks in Government Conference and the 2002 WSEC.

The board commented on the report and made suggestions for the coming year, including developing marketing items for employees; identifying areas of knowledge that need refreshing for employees attending a second supervisor session; and calculating the number of 'hits' to the ethics web site. In addition, the board expressed approval of the decreasing number of advisory opinions and increasing number of employees contacting the ethics office for code and existing advisory opinion information. Members also noted the high attendance for board meetings and the significant outreach activities, particularly meetings with executive and legislative leaders. Members acknowledged the success of the annual reception at which the executive and council vice chair appeared and made comments. The chair also noted that she had made presentations during the event to Ms. Clemens for service excellence, to Rev. Pruitt for ten years of service and to Mr. Lem Howell for appreciation for serving two terms on the board.

Following additional discussion, Mr. Carlson moved that the 2002 Annual Report be approved; Dr. Gordon seconded the motion and the board unanimously approved the report.

The chair recognized the excellent relationship between the staff and board that allowed for the significant accomplishments during 2002. Mr. Saltzman noted that he had met with the administrator and received an orientation as a new board and he found the meeting to be both enjoyable and worthwhile.

3. *Establish 2003 Mission and Goals.* The board reviewed the 2002 mission and goals and, following discussion, determined to adopt last year's mission and goals, without change, for 2003. Rev. Pruitt move and Mr. Carlson seconded that the board approve the 2003 mission and goals. The board unanimously adopted the motion.

4. *2003 Initiatives.* The administrator presented proposed 2003 initiatives that focused on outreach efforts to county leadership, employees and agencies for both the administrator and the board. Following discussion of board initiatives, the board added their intention to meet with county council members. Dr. Gordon then moved to approve the 2003 board initiatives; Mr. Saltzman seconded the motion and the board unanimously approved the motion. The chair directed the administrator to provide a sign-up sheet at the next meeting for board member-council member meeting assignments.

Mr. Thomas arrived at 10:05 a.m. The chair determined that discussion of the 2003 administrator initiatives would be held until later in the meeting due to Mr. Thomas' arrival and adjourned the meeting at 10:07 a.m. for a break. The board reconvened at 10:12 a.m.

5. *Terry Thomas, Executive Director, Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission.* Mr. Thomas identified his current and future initiatives for the SEEC: 1) meeting with city leadership to establish relationships and felt expectations of high ethical standards have been confirmed; 2) expanding education, including marketing ideas to employees on ethics decision-making models; 3) redesigning the SEEC web site to make it easier to use; and 4) rewriting the ethics code to make it simpler to understand on what an employee may or may not do. The chair noted that Mr. Thomas' initiatives conform to the King County's goals. Mr. Carlson asked about the separation of ethics and elections. Mr. Thomas replied that, while ethics rules also apply to the elections function, they have different responsibilities. Half of the SEEC staff is focused on ethics, per se, and half on elections functions, such as the voters pamphlet and campaign finance monitoring. He also noted that rewriting the code for a private institution is a simpler process than within government since many more groups are involved in the review and approval process of the final product. The chair asked if Mr. Thomas saw areas of priority that overlapped with the Board of Ethics? Mr. Thomas responded not at this time, but feels the offices and functions should look very much the same and looked forward to good communication between the agencies. General discussion followed on the ethics climate today, whistleblowers, lobbyist disclosure requirements and cultural norms related to ethical decisions. Chair Price Spratlen thanked Mr. Thomas for attending and expressed the board's desire to continue a collaborative relationship.

Mr. Thomas left the meeting at 10:50 a.m.

The board returned to 2003 administrator initiatives which included: 1) meet informally with executive branch directors and deputies and separately elected officials; 2) develop inexpensive marketing tools for employees to raise awareness of the office and the resources it provides; 3) explore development of interactive ethics game on the web site; 4) continue to review and improve supervisor training curriculum; and 5) focus training efforts on new employees and supervisors (the 2003 training plan was included in board materials.) Following discussion, Mr. Saltzman moved to approve the 2003 administrator initiatives; Mr. Carlson seconded the motion and the board unanimously adopted the motion.

Mr. Tanaka arrived at 10:50 a.m.

6. *Paul Tanaka, County Administrative Officer, Department of Executive Services.* The board welcomed Mr. Tanaka. He in turn welcomed Mr. Saltzman as a new board member and expressed his appreciation for being invited to attend the retreat. He stated he again must report significant cut backs in county funding; there is a 10% cut in the general fund for 2003 on top of a 6-7% budget reduction last year. There continues to be reductions in revenues and increases in need for services. Although the budget will not affect the Board of Ethics directly, the overall environment will be stressed. There are visible affects of the cutbacks, including closing parks and pools or transferring them to cities, and reductions in county court systems, and the offices of the prosecutor and assessor. County leadership is working to address the problem on all fronts--working with the legislature for revenue enhancements, trimming jobs, and working with labor unions on reducing benefits.

Mr. Tanaka stated that the board of ethics and administrator have much to be proud of, including 100% filing compliance for the financial disclosure program. He noted that gentle, consistent pressure from the ethics office, executive branch support and more reasonable filing requirements have made the difference. In addition, he commended the ethics training and education program the board and office outreach programs that have all borne fruit by increasing collaborative relationships throughout the county. He noted that in the past, the board and office placed emphasis on enforcement and scrutiny; today, emphasis is placed on accessibility, informative publications, well developed web site, and encouragement to ask questions. He stated that frequently asked ethics questions have already been addressed in past advisory opinions giving employees the guidance they need in present circumstances and this is a credit to the board's effectiveness. General discussion followed about media scrutiny of government, beginning in the early 1970's with Watergate and the resulting environment today.

In reply to the question of how the board might complement the county's 2003 agenda, Mr. Tanaka suggested continuing collaboration with executive branch as noted in the 2003 initiatives; expand meetings to boards and commissions; and continue developing the web page including exploring the ethics game. The key is to make ethics information available to employees and to continue direct contact with county leadership and employees.

Dr. Gordon asked if financial constraints might affect ethical breaches. Mr. Tanaka replied that this was unlikely, but today we have fewer employees doing more that results in less oversight and checks and balances. The group discussed how to acknowledge excellence in government and significant contributions by employees and whether such acknowledgement should come from within government or from an outside organization, such as the Municipal League or League of Women Voters. The group also discussed public expectations and the media's role in shaping the public's perception. The chair directed the administrator to place the matter on a later agenda for discussion.

The chair recognized the productive work of the board and the good relationships with Mr. Tanaka and Mr. Buck that have helped make the work possible. She thanked them for coming on a Saturday and stated that their attendance at the retreat was an indication of their support of the work of the board and office.

Mr. Tanaka left the meeting at 11:45 a.m.

Chair Price Spratlen announced that, should members wish to have new photos in the published 2003 annual report, they should sent them to the administrator no later than January 31, 2003. The administrator will schedule a board photo session including the executive and council chair. Date and time to be arranged.

Mr. Carlson moved and Mr. Saltzman seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting. The board unanimously approved the motion and the meeting was adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

Approved this 20th day of February, 2003, by the King County Board of Ethics.

Signed for the Board: _____
Mr. Roland H. Carlson, Acting Chair